

for me or pontificate about it or tell me what I think happened. I was right here. It wasn't theoretical. It wasn't a debate. It was a physical siege on the U.S. Capitol.

I was already angry that day. The idea that American—American—democratically elected politicians would participate in a process so foul as to be worthy of our most autocratic adversaries had me in a sour mood. The electoral college certification is supposed to be the functional equivalent of a swearing-in. It is where the thing gets made official, but it is not like any decisions are supposed to be made that day. But Senators HAWLEY and CRUZ and others, with their unlimited ambition, their big brains, and their supposed expertise in the Constitution, were dancing on the edge of overturning democracy itself.

But I actually had no idea how bad it was, that there was an ongoing organized conspiracy to steal the election for real, not in a "Russian hacking" kind of a way or not in a "too many of the people I don't agree with voted" kind of way—actually overturning the whole thing.

So no one needs to tell me how to interpret this. I was there when they yelled: "Lock down, lock down." I was here when Mike Pence was ushered off the floor. I was here when CHUCK GRASSLEY and anyone else with a personal protection detail was rushed to safety, and the rest of us were just locked in here and told to stay in our seats.

I was here when Senator TODD YOUNG made himself ready to physically confront the violent traitors. I was here when we were finally moved to an undisclosed location and LINDSEY GRAHAM yelled at the Capitol Police leadership for not having a plan to handle such a moment.

And I was here when Reverend Black pulled us together in unity. And I was here when all but a few of us decided enough is enough, and we were collectively determined to finish our work and finish the count that evening.

We were perilously close to losing everything that night. And some did. Police officers were maimed and killed. Custodial workers and Senate staffers were hiding, with zero protection.

The insurrectionists were explicit. They wanted to kill the Speaker of the House.

One year later should be a simple, solemn commemoration of what happened and a collective, unified determination to never let anything like that ever happen again.

But I am even more worried now because that moment of unity is gone, and, most importantly, that moment of moral clarity of collective, patriotic outrage is fading. It went from Republicans being apologetic about their President to voting to exonerate him. It went from Republicans being angry at him and denouncing him to voting against putting a bipartisan commission together to get all of the facts out.

It went from 99 percent of the public being crystal clear about the moral threat to the right rewriting history and, in some cases, the left going along with it by telling us that some issues poll better.

To be clear, the litmus test for both political parties is, to greater or lesser degrees, the extent to which one is loyal to the President—fair enough. That is how the modern two-party system works, for better or worse.

But Donald Trump is now defining fealty to him by one thing and one thing only: Are you willing to install him into power regardless of the vote count?

And so now every Republican politician and elected official—secretaries of state, county election commissioners, U.S. Senate candidates—have to promise to put Trump above democracy itself. And many are doing it. They are now organizing the next coup in plain sight.

Now, I don't know the economics or the psychology behind it. Maybe, it is ratings. Maybe, it is just the natural tendency among the chattering class to not want to sound too wild-eyed—that being unworried is what passes for savvy in this town. But everyone, including those who consider themselves patriots, seem so chill about what is going on that I am genuinely alarmed. They are installing loyalists across the country in order to cheat, and they are not being subtle about it.

Meanwhile, the cocktail set in Washington is busy policing our tone and talking about Democratic overreach, and so the defining question this week and this year is this: Are we willing to face the challenge in front of us?

Yes, there is COVID. Yes, there is climate. But democracy itself is at risk in a way that we haven't seen in centuries, and we are standing around as a country arguing about mostly nonsense.

And I think here is the problem for all of us, and here is why this is so hard emotionally: If we take a moment to realize what is at stake, we might realize what is required. It will require Republicans to stand up to an autocrat. It will require Democrats to stop arguing amongst themselves. It will require reporters to write stories that get fewer clicks than whatever BS is driving the news of the day. It will require citizens to understand that democracy in this country is not what we have. It is what we do, and it is never guaranteed.

So, this week, we commemorate the fallen. We thank everyone who came to democracy's defense across the country and in our great Capital City. But we know that this was round 1. We know that authoritarians rarely give up, and we know that they aren't doing their preparation for the next coup in hiding. They are doing it all in plain sight, and they must be stopped.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

REMEMBERING HARRY REID

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, today, I rise to pay tribute to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a champion for Nevada. He was one of the most powerful, dedicated, and effective advocates that my home State has ever seen. He worked for the benefit of Nevadans for almost 50 years in both State and national politics. Everyone living in the Silver State today has benefited from his wise and tenacious efforts.

But before Harry Reid was my Senator and the Senator for the State of Nevada, he was a neighbor to my family. He was a mentor and a friend.

Now, I grew up in Las Vegas, just down the street from the Reid family, and my sister and I attended public school with their oldest son, Rory. And the entire Cortez family and Masto family and I want to send our condolences to his beautiful wife Landra; his children, Lana Reid Barringer, Rory, Leif, Josh, and Key; and his 19 grandchildren and his great-grandchildren.

Harry Reid was irreplaceable, not just to them but to so many people, including me and many of my colleagues in this Chamber. He was unfailingly supportive of me throughout my entire time in public service.

You know, I remember when I first decided to run for the office of Nevada's attorney general. One of the first people I called was Senator Reid, and I asked him for advice. I asked him for advice on running for office because it was the first time I had ever run for any type of office, and I had chosen to take on a statewide campaign. Not only was he supportive, but he was candid in his comments—as only Harry can be—about campaigning, the types of individuals working in the campaign world, and what to beware of, of those working in that campaign world. His advice still rings true today.

When I was serving, and fortunate enough to be elected statewide as the attorney general, Senator Reid was always available for a call. And he never forgot about Nevada and working with everybody in Nevada from his seat here as a majority leader.

I remember one time, as the attorney general, I got a call from a Senator here in the U.S. Senate, and the Senator said to me: I was just talking to Senator Reid, and there is an issue that came up that I would like to focus on, but Senator Reid said: You better call my attorney general first in Nevada to make sure that she and the State of Nevada are supportive of it. And to this day, I now serve with that Senator. I will never forget getting a call from a U.S. Senator, as a sitting attorney general, to talk about an issue that was important for Nevada because Senator Reid knew what was important for him and his State.

He also had this uncanny ability to call you at just the right time, when you needed support or encouragement, when you needed advice or just someone to commiserate with. We all know

he didn't like to stay on the phone long, but he knew when you needed him, and he would be there. He was a compassionate and kind man, a side of him that many people did not see but many people also benefited from greatly over the years. It is my incredible honor to be able to hold the seat he occupied so well for so long.

Harry Reid accomplished so much as a Nevada Senator. Born in the little town of Searchlight, NV, he knew his home State better than anyone. He understood that Nevada was a microcosm of our country. He knew that Nevada's diversity mirrored this Nation's, and that is why Senator Reid worked to give Nevada a greater role in deciding each party's nominee for President. He wanted to ensure that a State as diverse and dynamic as Nevada played an important role in choosing America's leaders.

Harry Reid also understood Nevada's landscapes, from the desert outside of Searchlight that so many of us have heard about to the snowy peaks of the Ruby Mountains in winter, to the glistening waters of Lake Tahoe. He was a dedicated environmentalist who helped conserve Nevada's abundant national treasures, keeping our State beautiful for future generations and protecting outdoor recreation that fuels our State's economy.

And we all know he would not back down from a fight, especially when it involved Nevada; whether that was blocking every effort to dump nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain without Nevada's agreement or advocating for Federal funding to help upgrade Nevada's schools, airports, roads and bridges, he was relentless in his push to get our State the resources that we deserved.

Harry Reid was as diligent in supporting Nevada's rural and Tribal communities as he was in building up our world-class cities. He helped create Nevada's booming clean energy economy and make the State a destination for those looking to build an innovative, sustainable future.

The changes that he helped set in motion were so far-reaching that they allowed Nevada to benefit from the innovation economy of the 21st century. He paved the way for us. It isn't just Nevadans who are better off because of Harry Reid; the entire country gained because of his hard work and his dedication. He helped rescue the country by getting America through the great recession, taking extra care to support the hospitality and tourism economies that are so vital to the economy and the jobs in Nevada.

He was instrumental in protecting Nevada's and the Nation's Dreamers and immigrant families.

In his crowning legislative achievement, he fought tirelessly to get millions of Americans access to affordable healthcare. His work was key to ensuring that the Affordable Care Act became law, lowering healthcare costs and giving access to high-quality care to millions who didn't have it before.

Harry Reid was a great American, but first and foremost, he was a great Nevadan. He never forgot where he came from, and there is no doubt in my mind that is what motivated him every single day. As Nevada's son, he made a tremendous difference for our State and for every American. He was a wonderful friend and a true public servant and for that we will miss him in the Senate and across the Nation.

TRIBUTE TO CLINTON JEROME HILL

Mr. President, I would also like to talk a little bit today about another incredible American whom I have come to know. Both my husband and I, Paul and I, got to know this individual over the years. He has become a friend. He is an incredible American, and today is his birthday. His name is Clinton Jerome Hill.

Clint is a true hero, the iconic Secret Service agent who jumped onto a moving car while bullets flew in an effort to save President Kennedy from an assassination.

Born on this day in 1932, Clint Hill grew up in the tiny town of Washburn, ND. He was a good student; he loved music; and he was an outstanding athlete. Clint went on to attend Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, where he was a standout football and baseball player, graduating in 1954.

Though Clint had visions of being a history teacher and athletics coach, he was drafted immediately into the U.S. Army, where he worked in counter-intelligence in an Army field office in Denver, CO.

In 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower happened to be in Colorado on vacation when the President suffered a heart attack and was hospitalized for 7 weeks. That is when Clint ended up meeting several members of Eisenhower's Secret Service detail. He was deeply impressed with the dignity and demeanor of these fine men. At that time, there were just 269 agents in the entire Secret Service organization and, in 1958, Clint became one of them.

A year later, Agent Hill was assigned to the White House at age 27. He was one of a handful of men responsible for protecting the President of the United States. In 1959 and 1960, Clint Hill traveled with President Eisenhower on his goodwill tours to Europe, Asia, India, the Middle East, and South America.

When John F. Kennedy was elected President in 1960, Clint was assigned to protect the First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy. Both President and Mrs. Kennedy were fond of Agent Hill and trusted him implicitly. Wherever Mrs. Kennedy went, Clint Hill was by her side.

And so it was that Agent Hill accompanied President and Mrs. Kennedy to Texas on November 22, 1963. Clint was present at the horrifying moment in Dealey Plaza when President Kennedy, riding in an open convertible, was shot. Clint immediately began to run toward the President's car to protect him, and many of us have seen that dramatic footage: Jackie Kennedy extending her hand back to Agent Hill, who leapt

onto the back of the moving car and jumped into the vehicle as it sped away to Parkland Hospital in Dallas.

After President Kennedy's tragic assassination, Clint Hill continued to protect Jacqueline Kennedy and her two children. Then, in 1964, he was transferred back to the White House. And in 1967, he became the Special Agent in Charge of Presidential Protection for President Lyndon Johnson. Throughout 1968, Clint was a Secret Service agent who had LBJ's back.

Clint Hill devoted his life to the Secret Service, ultimately being promoted to Assistant Director in Charge of all Protective Forces. He was married, had two sons, but like so many selfless Secret Service agents, he missed countless holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays.

In 1975, Clint retired from the Secret Service, a job and organization that he loved. In the years since, he has written three best-selling books about his work with his coauthor and now wife, Lisa McCubbin.

Today is Clint's 90th birthday. So, today, I want to pay tribute to a true American hero, a man who was willing to put his life on the line, not once but time and again to protect our leaders.

Now, I know something of the sacrifice this involves. My husband Paul is a retired Secret Service agent, and I am familiar with the commitment it takes for an agent to walk out that door every day to defend the President from threats. So on behalf of Paul, myself, the entire Masto family, we want to wish a happy birthday to our friend Clint Hill. Thank you for your service to our country and our sincere best wishes for many more wonderful years ahead.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I know that you are probably like me and you have been grateful for the time to be home and to see family and friends and just to chat with them about what is going on in their lives and the issues that are important to them, what they are looking at. It has been so interesting to get their perspective as we have visited.

I flipped through the papers yesterday, and I realize that many of our friends around town have this renewed sense of optimism about President Biden's ability to lead the country. I found that really quite interesting. You could look at it and say: It may be a new year, but it is the same old Biden.

It goes without saying that I do not share what I see as a misguided view. I entered this year with the same